



# PUBLIC HEALTH BYTES

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Henrico Health Department's Newsletter

Working in partnership  
with the citizens of  
Henrico County to create  
the conditions for health.



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## Communicable Diseases

**Henrico Roundup: Overview** -The past month continued to see Shigella cases reported to the Henrico County and other metro Richmond Health Departments since first reported in October. In addition, we are aware of sporadic reports of Hepatitis A, Legionella and Norovirus. **Pertussis** - Henrico Health Department has confirmed a 2<sup>nd</sup> case of pertussis in a student at Nuckols Farm Elementary School. A blast fax to medical providers went out on Nov. 25 and letters to close contacts advising them to receive prophylaxis were distributed through the school. Consider pertussis in individuals with a persistent cough (> 7 days), paroxysmal coughing or cough with an inspiratory whoop. Pertussis test kits can be obtained through the health department. **Serologic testing is not recommended for diagnosis.** Case patients should remain out of school/work until five days of appropriate antibiotic therapy are completed. Pertussis is highly contagious—antibiotic therapy can prevent secondary cases in close contacts. See “Pertussis Resources” at <http://www.publichealthbytes.org>

**Seasonal Influenza: Surveillance** -Virginia 2008/2009 Influenza Surveillance Activity Level: **No Activity** (As of 11/15/2008). **Google Flu Tracking** – There is another surveillance tool for influenza now available to the general public. Google unveiled their new flu tracker based on Google search data. See: [www.google.com/flutrends](http://www.google.com/flutrends).

**Thanksgiving Day is National Family History Day**  
– See <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/FamilyHistory/>

## Community Health Improvement

**Saving Babies in Henrico:** The Henrico County Health Department sponsored a town hall meeting at New Bridge Baptist Church on 11/6/08. The meeting was called to discuss how to prevent infant mortality in Henrico County and to introduce **Community Voice: Taking it to the People**. Many of the citizens attending expressed interest in **Community Voice** (CV) and signed up for the lay health advisers (LHA) training pilot program. The pilot began on November 14<sup>th</sup> and will last approximately four weeks. The goal is for LHAs to interact with people in the community to share the basic health messages learned in the training. The premise of ‘each one teach one’ embodies the mission of the program, with the core belief that people can help one another improve their own health status and have healthier babies. Refer patients to the CV website:

[http://www.co.henrico.va.us/health/community\\_voice.html](http://www.co.henrico.va.us/health/community_voice.html)

**Health Equity in Virginia:** The Office of Minority Health and Public Health Policy at the Virginia Department of Health recently released their report on health equity in Virginia, **Unequal Health Across the Commonwealth: A Snapshot**  
<http://www.vdh.state.va.us/healthpolicy/2008report.htm>

## Pandemic Flu - ALERT PHASE WHO: 3; US: 0

### Emergency Preparedness

**Program Updates: Mike Magner is Back!!** Help us welcome back Mike Magner in his role as our district emergency planner. Mike successfully completed a tour of duty in Afghanistan. We also thank Steven Parker for his great work during Mike's absence. **Medical Reserve Corps** - We have had a great 2008 and look forward to continued growth and capability in 2009. Please continue to refer potential members. See: <http://www.co.henrico.va.us/health/mrc.html>

### Prevention Updates

**Vaccine Updates: Hep A vaccine** - CDC reports, “As of December 1, 2008, Merck's Pediatric/Adolescent formulation of hepatitis A vaccine, VAQTA<sup>®</sup>, will again be available for ordering. Based on current information, it is estimated that the Adult formulation of VAQTA<sup>®</sup> will be available in late first quarter 2009 or early second quarter 2009. GSK production and supply of their Pediatric and Adult hepatitis A vaccine (Pediatric & Adult Havrix<sup>®</sup>) and their Adult hepatitis A/hepatitis B combination vaccine (Twinrix<sup>®</sup>) are currently in good supply to meet demand.” **Hib Vaccine** - Hib vaccine continues to be in short supply. The CDC is still recommending deferral of the booster dose of Hib vaccine at the 15-18 month well child check until supplies are sufficient. Office practitioners should continue to keep a list of individuals who will need an additional dose of Hib vaccine when supplies improve. CDC recommends the use of combination vaccines whenever possible. Henrico Health Department's supply of single antigen Hib vaccine is VERY limited. Please do not refer patients to us for single antigen Hib vaccine given the supply issues. Supplies should improve by the second half of 2009. **Rabies Vaccine** - Rabies vaccine supply has improved. RabAvert<sup>®</sup> (Novartis) is now available for post-exposure prophylaxis and does not require a password. RabAvert<sup>®</sup> may also be available for pre-exposure prophylaxis in high-risk situations. IMOVAX<sup>®</sup> (Sanofi) is only available for post-exposure prophylaxis and continues to require a password and consultation with the health department. For more information, please see [www.cdc.gov/rabies](http://www.cdc.gov/rabies).

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